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ABSTRACT

A July, 1999 survey of seven colleges and a school consortium highlighted issues to consider when planning for implementation of Curriculum 2000 reforms in Britain. The project's primary focus was the impact of the changes on the Advanced (A level) and Advanced Supplementary (AS) qualifications. The colleges operate in different local settings with different experiences with collaboration. Draft specifications for new AS/A2 and General National Vocational Qualifications courses are awaiting approval. Post-16 providers welcome the opportunity to offer students a broader experience, and are planning increases in AS subject offerings. Generally, institutions welcome Curriculum 2000 as creating the opportunity for students to mix academic and vocational programs. Colleges have differing responses to the Key Skills initiative, depending on past experience with other programs and their resources. Curriculum 2000 enhances the importance of tutorial and counseling support, and brings additional responsibilities for tutors related to guidance, monitoring, and Key Skills. Many colleges see the move toward more resource-based learning as inevitable and recognize the implications for student guidance from Curriculum 2000 changes. Some colleges are using existing management or curriculum task groups to work on the changes; others have set up new groups. Practical implementation issues are: time tabling the new curriculum; the assessment and examination cycle; funding; increased teaching time and costs; increased staffing; and new accommodation demands for new courses. (Information on the colleges and consortium is appended.) (YLB)

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Development Agency

Curriculum 2000

Reformulated A and AS Levels: aspects of delivery

Ruth Bromley, Andrew Morris, Maggie Greenwood

November 1999

Research report

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Preface

The research presented in this document was carried out in July 1999 at a time when Sixth Form and FE colleges and schools were beginning to plan for the implementation of the new Curriculum 2000 reforms. At the time there was relatively little information available on the details of the reforms, such as subject specifications, the new Key Skills qualification, FEFC funding or UCAS tariff. However, the colleges in the research sample were active in their preparations to implement the new curriculum and genuinely supported the new reforms.

While this research is just a snapshot of the ever-changing scene of challenges faced by colleges and schools, it highlights a number of issues which are still relevant to those colleges considering implementing the new curriculum. It shows that since all colleges operate in a unique environment their plans are dependent upon their own situation, related to their internal structure and organisation, as well as external factors such as the history of competition or collaboration in their local environment. This research discusses the planning stages used by the colleges and their proposals for implementing both the core and enrichment element of the new reforms.

It is expected that colleges preparing for Curriculum 2000 will find the discussions and ideas presented in this report of benefit to their own implementation. Since many of the factors concerning colleges were still unresolved at the time of publication, the issues that colleges were tackling in July are as relevant today as when the research was carried out.

Maggie Greenwood

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FEDA would like to thank the following Colleges who took part in the case study:
King George V Sixth Form College, Southport
Newham Sixth Form College, London
Worcester College of Technology
North Devon College, Barnstaple
Teeside Tertiary College, Middlesbrough
Yale College, Wrexham
West Kent College, Tonbridge
Thanks are also extended to **La Swap Sixth Form Consortium, c/o William Ellis School, Camden**, London.

1 Introduction

Aims of Curriculum 2000

The Secretary of State for Education has set out priorities for educational reforms to raise standards, widen participation and meet the skills challenge. The reforms intend to make post-16 study broader and more flexible, encourage young people to study more subjects, provide an easier combination of academic and vocational study and have an entitlement that includes main core, Key Skills, tutorial and enrichment. This will in turn encourage more participation post-16, improve retention and enhance achievement.

The reforms aim to:

- provide a range of qualifications from which learners can choose programmes that meet their needs and gain credit for their achievements
- ensure that the qualifications provided are worthwhile and valued and that learners can combine academic and vocational studies appropriately and coherently
- offer scope for specialisation to support progression while at the same time encouraging more learners to broaden their knowledge, understanding and skills
- encourage all learners to attain a high level of Key Skills
- offer clear progression routes into higher education, employment and further training. ***(Qualifications 16–19 QCA 1999)***

The FEDA context

In the summer term of 1999 FEDA commissioned a project to look at ways in which a small sample of colleges across England and Wales were preparing for the Curriculum 2000 reforms. This was in response to an evident need in the FE sector for some case study material that would be helpful in assisting colleges in their planning for implementation of the reforms.

The project focussed primarily on the impact of the changes on the A Level and AS qualifications. While the Advanced GNVQ is an important component of the new reforms, this project did not set out to address specifically the changes necessitated in the new GNVQ arrangements, although they are referred to in the case studies. The colleges were invited to provide case study material on how they were preparing for Curriculum 2000 at the time of the survey. Inevitably colleges have moved on considerably since the research was carried out, but the findings are still valid and can assist colleges in their own preparations and provide contact points in each FEDA region for networking and support. The colleges were chosen to represent a range of settings, rather than examples of best practice.

The participating institutions

Seven colleges in the FE sector and one Sixth Form Consortium contributed to this project, providing detailed reports on their response to Curriculum 2000 and the issues they are currently addressing. This report is largely based on their identification of opportunities and issues and their progress in looking at strategies for implementing the changes in their different local contexts. The report was compiled between July and October 1999 when decisions were still awaited on funding (for the FE sector), the accreditation of AS/A2, GNVQ and Key Skills specifications by QCA and the new UCAS tariff.

The aim of the report is to enable post-16 providers to have a picture of 'work in progress' in these institutions part way through a difficult planning period for colleges and schools.
The colleges are:

- **King George V Sixth Form College** in Southport
- **Newham Sixth Form College** in London
- **North Devon College** in Barnstaple
- **Teeside Tertiary College** in Middlesbrough
- **West Kent College** in Tonbridge
- **Worcester College** of Technology
- **Yale College** in Wrexham
- The school in the project is **LaSwap Sixth Form Consortium** in Camden, North London

The institutions differ in geographical location, size and range of curriculum offer, and internal structure. They all have a large cohort of 16–19-year-old full time students studying on Advanced Level programmes but this group is not necessarily the majority group in the college, nor is the general educational programme of AS/A2, GNVQ and Key Skills necessarily the main course followed by the younger students.

Worcester College of Technology has a Sixth Form Centre as a separate department of the College with its own facilities; other colleges have either an A Level department or vocationally focused faculties with A Levels in a number of them. The colleges also differ in that some are the main provider of Advanced Level courses for their area and others are competing for Advanced Level students with school sixth forms and other FE providers. A description of each institution is given in Appendix 1.

The response of the colleges and the School Consortium to Curriculum 2000

Curriculum 2000 is broadly welcomed by the institutions that have participated in this project. Post-16 providers agree with the Government's policy of encouraging

> "advanced level students to pursue broader and more demanding programmes of study within a framework offering increased choice and flexibility"
> ***(Qualifying for Success DfEE 1997)***

With varying degrees of emphasis, depending on their local contexts, the sample institutions generally:

- approve the overall aims of Curriculum 2000:
- the notion of a curriculum entitlement for all 16–19 students on advanced level programmes
- the fact that the reforms are in general consonant with what they already provide
- the emphasis on curriculum breadth
- the facility to mix academic and vocational approaches
- the recognition of the importance of Key Skills
- the importance given to enhancement
- the value placed on tutorial work and support for students' learning and progression.

The colleges and the School Consortium see the reforms as helping them to re-focus their educational objectives in terms of the breadth and range of their offer and in terms of widening participation, improving retention and raising attainment. They also welcome the recognition of the value of enhancement.

> "The national policies which inform the new curriculum are in many ways consonant with what we do already. The College curriculum is already broad and relatively flexible. Both in terms of the College's ethos and its current best practice, we are enthusiastic about introducing greater breadth and flexibility into the curriculum offer. The College has already made progress in developing individualised learning programmes. The College attempts to draw together the breadth of student experience and give credit for it. The elements are attendance, employability skills, enhancement and curriculum achievement."
>
> ***Newham Sixth Form College***

Some colleges have been running an enrichment programme for some time and value the recognition of this in the new reforms. An example of an enrichment programme currently being offered to students at King George V College is found in Appendix 2.

For many institutions Curriculum 2000 is seen as providing a valuable opportunity for a review of both internal and external issues:

> "to further enhance our competitive advantage by providing a real mixture of vocational and academic courses to our students to enhance cooperation between the Sixth Form Centre and other departments within the college to build our own support/counselling and Key Skills provision to seek partnerships with outside providers"
>
> ***Worcester College of Technology***

Colleges believe that Curriculum 2000 offers a good opportunity to re-think their course offer and timetable. The discussion of possible AS/A/GNVQ combinations has included consideration of advice and guidance, overlapping provision, issues of recruitment, retention and achievement, and the appropriate Key Skills qualification for a wide curriculum offer.

> "Not only should it be possible for A Level students to access GNVQ units and vice versa, but also a greater mix and match should be possible between GNVQ units. However we need to remain flexible to accommodate the further details which have not yet been fully released."
>
> ***West Kent College***

> "We decided to maintain the diversity of the College's offer to 16–19-year-olds and to continue to value equally all the courses in our portfolio. We determined that we needed to keep the student at the centre of our thinking and that our curriculum had to prepare them for change. Students had to be prepared for managing their own learning to a greater degree"
>
> ***North Devon College***

2 The local context

Competition and collaboration

The colleges and the School Consortium operate in very different local settings. Two of the tertiary colleges serve large rural areas and are the sole provider of post-16 education for the majority of the local population. In both cases the colleges work closely with 11–16 feeder schools and the small number of 11–18 schools in the area are some distance away. In addition to providing A Level and GNVQ courses for 16–19-year-olds both colleges offer a wide range of vocational programmes from all the FEFC curriculum areas. These colleges have to consider Curriculum 2000 in the context of the rest of their offer and their own internal delivery models and college structure. They are not worried by competition from other providers; however in an isolated rural context there is not much impetus for collaboration.

For other colleges in the project and for the School Consortium the situation is different. The Sixth Form College in Southport is in a very secure position; it is an over-subscribed college with a high academic reputation and enjoys good relations with other local colleges and schools. Collaboration between providers is positive.

For the remaining colleges and the School Consortium the position is more complex. In some cases local competition for Advanced Level students is fierce, and relations between providers are not always smooth (for example some 11–18 schools may be reluctant to allow colleges to be present at Year 10 and 11 parent and careers evenings). In many areas, particularly where there are newly-opened sixth forms there is a history of suspicion and rivalry. In a highly competitive market situation it is perceived as particularly important for colleges and schools to keep a careful eye on the other providers' plans for September 2000.

With the possible prospect of funding convergence between the school and the college sectors and the changes introduced by Curriculum 2000 there is an opportunity for wider negotiations between providers. It is considered important for colleges to adopt a pro-active approach to their more reluctant local partners in future. For schools with small sixth forms and minority subjects links with the local college could be to their benefit; such links would have to include a common timetable and travel arrangements between sites.

In an area such as Kent, where the new Learning Partnership is being evolved at a county level, practical collaborations should arise from discussion of specific local conditions and possibilities.

Some colleges are experiencing the positive effects of collaborative developments.

Example: Sefton Lifelong Learning Partnership

> In Southport the Sefton Lifelong Learning Partnership is proving to have a positive effect in relation to information sharing. The Partnership involves the LEA and the three FE colleges (two general FE and the Sixth Form College). It has started by mapping the progression of all 16-year-olds in the authority between school and college/employment/training. This is seen as an essential first step before planning the provision for 16–19-year-olds in Sefton. The mapping exercise will be complete in October 1999.
>
> The Sefton Single Regeneration Budget Project seeks to address the problems of social deprivation in the town centre area - fairly typical of the urban decline of seaside towns. In addition to support for lead industries such as tourism and a far-sighted telematics initiative, the Project seeks to address educational and training needs.

The education project has identified Key Skills 14–19 as a high priority area and is supporting a collaborative approach to Key Skills between all school and colleges serving the area. For the post-16 element, one 11–18 school and the two colleges are cooperating on training and on programme development in preparation for the year 2000 Key Skills initiative, in association with Edexcel. The project will last to 2002 and cost £366,000.

Response of students and parents

The timing of decisions about Curriculum 2000 has made it very difficult for schools and colleges to plan their marketing strategy and activities and prepare accurate course information for prospective students and their parents. In most cases they feel well placed to take marketing advantage of their already flexible timetable and wide range of academic and vocational courses but they recognise that they will need to launch a major marketing exercise to inform potential students, their parents and their feeder schools of the implications of the changes.

It is impossible to know at this stage what the reaction of parents and students will be to the new curriculum; there is a general feeling that they will value maximum flexibility and access to as broad a range of programmes as possible. Some colleges report that students and parents have expressed concern about the extension of learning agreements and whether students cope with four or five subjects at Advanced level.

Response of employers and HE providers

On the whole there would seem to be a low level of awareness of the changes at the time of writing. There is some evidence of a general welcome by a range of universities and employers to both the potential breadth of the new curriculum and to the emphasis on Key Skills development. Overall HE providers appear to be adopting a 'wait and see' attitude. It is possible that the results of AS level will be used as evidence when making offers of university places but this is by no means clear at the moment and admissions tutors will need to consider the balance of need of a core of A2 as opposed to breadth. In view of the lower entrance grades being allowed for some degree courses recently (e.g. N grades) it seems likely that the new AS will shortly have a currency of its own. It is difficult to say more until UCAS formally announce the revised tariff to come into effect in 2001 (due to be published in December 1999).

Links between schools and colleges

The intention of Curriculum 2000 is to improve curriculum continuity from 14–19 and to provide a coherent and seamless transition from key stage 4 into the new AS and then to A Level. At the time of writing the new syllabus specifications were not yet approved so it was difficult for colleges to make any comment about this.

Colleges and the School Consortium are preparing prospectuses and course information leaflets outlining their 'Curriculum 2000' offer (particularly at AS level) in as much detail as they can at this stage. Local newspaper articles are planned and open days and parents evenings will be arranged with a special focus on Curriculum 2000. Many Colleges have been asked to do presentations on the changes to school parents.

3 Curriculum entitlement

Introduction

The Government's reforms are designed to implement a new framework of qualifications for 16–19-year-olds. A student's programme will include, in addition to their main course, enhancement activities and an accredited Key Skills programme. In the FE sector the funding tariff is under review to reflect both these different elements of a student's programme and the requirement for colleges to provide a larger programme (e.g. four or five AS in the first year, or GNVQ Single or part awards). Post-16 providers welcome the notion of curriculum entitlement for students and this section details ways in which different institutions are planning to introduce changes to their curriculum offer.

The issue of funding affects the college and the school sectors differently at present. The concern of the colleges is that although the tariff is being revised it will not adequately cover the extra costs of the increased provision they will have to offer. For the school sector, which continues at present with an age-weighted pupil funding formula, there is the prospect of planning a larger offer with no extra funding. Resourcing is dealt with in more detail in Chapter five.

Planning the revised curriculum offer

At the time that the research was being carried out, draft specifications for the new AS/A2 and GNVQ courses were still awaiting QCA approval and institutions were adopting a careful approach in planning the new offer. In some cases curriculum planners are able to build on their experience of piloting the new AS levels but in a number of subject areas there is concern that the draft specifications contain too much content and that the level appears no 'easier' than the old A Level. Maths and science teachers are particularly worried. The scale of subject change clearly varies. Recently modularised courses seem to have anticipated the changes; in others up to 50% of the current syllabus will no longer be available, e.g Politics. The situation will be clearer when QCA releases the approved specifications. The sample colleges did not comment on the proposed Advanced Extension (World class) Tests, which will be offered in 13 or 14 subject areas.

Criteria for determining the AS offer

Within a number of the sample colleges it has been the norm for some students to take a broad range of subjects, for example a combination of A levels and Advanced Supplementary courses with A Level General Studies as an additional programme.

In one college students can take up options which allow them to combine A Levels with AS subjects, City and Guilds courses, GCSEs and language programmes. All A Level students study for a Key Skills award. Their total hours per week may be as much as 25 or 26.

For this college the initial move to Curriculum 2000, with students taking four courses in the first year, may not require major changes to learning agreements. Many colleges have been piloting the new AS; one college is considering including a skills based AS Level, for example critical thinking, as a common element in an A Level programme. Another possibility is to promote language AS Levels as an element in a five AS programme. In the local context this is currently an area of excellent, but under utilised resources, with definite value for students in terms of local employment possibilities.

In general post-16 providers welcome the opportunity to offer students a broader experience. Some colleges are planning a small increase in the range of AS subjects offered, to include new AS only courses such as Citizenship or Critical Thinking. For some FE colleges Curriculum 2000 will enable a more efficient use of resources because it is hoped to increase the average size of A Level groups through students increasing the number of courses they take. In many sixth form colleges this is not an option as the average class size is already large. In some colleges the present AS offer is based upon AS Level being achieved in one year of study. Economies of scale have resulted in AS Level being taught only in first year A Level groups and staff have been encouraged to follow syllabuses for which this procedure is appropriate. In general, colleges are using the need to plan for Curriculum 2000 as an opportunity to review their current A Level provision and in some cases to rationalise the number of subjects offered.

The institutions in the project which have a large A Level cohort are planning a core offer of four AS courses but making provision for students to add a fifth (e.g. General Studies) and in one case possibly a sixth subject if resources allow. All institutions are planning for students to be able to mix Advanced GNVQ programmes with AS.

Example: a sixth form college (King George V Sixth Form College, Southport)

With regard to A Level provision all students will be advised to undertake a programme of four AS courses plus General Studies (currently the offer is three A Levels plus General Studies). Students may be allowed a sixth AS if it fits the timetable but resourcing issues may make this impossible. Advanced GNVQ students will be able to take an AS course in addition to General Studies. A Single Award GNVQ will be available alongside AS/A2 options.

The college will endeavour to assess the demand for different AS courses from applicants: students will apply between November and February for the following September. It is anticipated that certain courses will increase disproportionately in popularity, especially IT, French and Mathematics - the last two were always among the most popular Advanced Supplementary courses for students taking 3 and a half A Levels. Ethics/Philosophy may also be offered, as the current AS attracts a number of students aiming at careers in medicine and law.

It is expected that a number of elective courses will be less popular as a result of AS/A2 and may need to be withdrawn. This may include some GCSE courses for A Level/GNVQ Advanced students (for example Classical Greek, French and Spanish) and courses such as Foreign Languages at Work and the Certificate of European studies.

The position of sub-A Level IT courses will also need further planning - at present some 250 students per year take CLAIT (about 65 hours over one year). FEFC guidance on Key Skills may mean that more students have to follow a reduced programme. The college is considering opting for a more intensive elective course, probably the European Computer Driving Licence.

Example: a tertiary college (Teeside Tertiary College, Middlesbrough)

This college plans to retain its current breadth of provision at level 3 in both academic and vocational curriculum areas, reflecting the continuing commitment of the college to a comprehensive tertiary portfolio.

Full time students taking level 3 courses will be expected to select a first year programme of study which includes 5 elements. Examples of a 5 element programme:
Four AS courses + Key Skills (some AS courses to be converted to full A Levels over two years)
Two AS courses + 12 unit GNVQ (2 elements per year for 2 years) + Key Skills
Three AS courses + 6 unit GNVQ (1 element per year for 2 years) + Key Skills
(Key Skills award will be treated for programme and timetable purposes as a separate element).

In 2001 second year full time students at level 3 will select a reduced programme with normally three or four of these elements.

Students will be offered complementary and support courses as part of their programmes of study. To include: Key Skills courses, AS citizenship, A Level general studies and IT courses.

Mixing academic and vocational programmes

Many colleges have in the past encouraged students on vocational programmes to take an A or AS Level course. In some places all GNVQ Advanced students have taken A Level General Studies and in other places students taking BTEC National or GNVQ in Art and Design have all taken an Art A Level. Where this has been arranged on an individual basis the take up has been limited. However where teams have offered a package of vocational and academic qualifications successful models have been developed, for example in the Art and Design area. This has sometimes required teachers to take an A Level brief and rewrite it in BTEC National terms so that the work students do fulfils the requirements of both the academic and vocational programme. The school consortium in the project already runs GNVQ Advanced (7% of the offer) with a 'friendly' A or AS Level block.

The timetable in one general FE college has always allowed vocational students to take an appropriate A or AS level subject, for example GNVQ Business with A Level Law, GNVQ Leisure and Tourism with A Level Geography, various social and child care courses with A Level Psychology and Sociology. In practice, many attempts in the past to mix academic and vocational programmes across departmental boundaries have only worked on paper for both practical and ideological reasons. Problems encountered have included timetabling and logistic difficulties, and the different 'cultures' of different departments (in relation to issues such as assessment procedures, student monitoring, relations with parents and general issues of quality control and boundaries).

All the institutions in the project see Curriculum 2000 as providing the impetus to resolve some of these problems. In order to create the opportunity for students to mix academic and vocational programmes colleges will have to adopt a whole college approach to student guidance, timetabling, and course planning and monitoring. The role of the personal tutor in monitoring a student's progress as he or she moves between different departments is seen as extremely important.

The opportunity to extend the provision of mixed programmes is generally welcomed. It is felt that a learning agreement composed of both vocational and academic qualifications will enhance a student's progression opportunities and employment prospects.

Planning has begun to construct programmes of study which will include a balanced combination of academic and vocational courses. This will include mixing A and AS Levels with Full, Single and Part Award GNVQs. At one college the combination of courses likely to be offered initially will be in the following vocational areas: Health and Social Care, Sports Studies, Information Technology, Science and Business Studies. Offering the new AS qualification to GNVQ students may prove particularly popular in areas like Languages, IT, Maths, Psychology, Law, Business Studies and Biology. There will be opportunities for both lateral and longitudinal approaches to the Full, Single and Part Award GNVQs. They can be taken across a single year or across two years - increasing the flexibility.

The divide between GNVQ and A Level will become much less clearly defined - the situation of BTEC National Diploma is more problematic. In many colleges a large proportion of full time 16–19 students currently study on BTEC National and other vocational programmes. The fact that BTEC programmes have not been integrated into the Curriculum 2000 reforms and will continue to have a separate structure is causing problems for those attempting to deal with the changes. Nevertheless some colleges are looking for ways of incorporating these programmes into their overall scheme. An example of a table of academic and vocational combinations being considered at one tertiary college is given in appendix 3.

The idea of packaging groups of courses is being explored in some places. For example AS/A2 Science students might be encouraged to take a GNVQ part award in Health and Social Care. These packages would not be prescriptive; students would be offered the academic/vocational mix but would not have to sign up for the whole programme.

Example: a rural tertiary college (North Devon College)

At this college students will be expected to take four first year courses plus Key Skills and tutorial. The offer is designed to provide a mixed academic and vocational general education programme where both aspects of the provision are seen to have equal value.

As a general rule the college will not offer competing A Levels and GNVQs and may reduce its current A Level offer. Where the subject area in question is more 'vocational' the college will offer GNVQ rather than A Level as long as its removal will not adversely affect paths to HE or employment. The college runs a wide range of vocational programmes across all FEFC curriculum areas. It intends to provide a mixture of academic and vocational qualifications in a college wide grid. This would represent a general education programme for 16–19 students. It would exist in parallel with the existing vocational provision, which would continue to be departmentally based, and would provide a route for those who are already clear in their vocational objectives.

Key Skills

Colleges and the Consortium have differing responses to the Key Skills developments, depending on past experience of programmes such as the ASDAN award or the Cambridge Diploma of Achievement and the extent of their resources. The success or failure of pilot programmes will inform future plans, as will the final decisions on accreditation from QCA. For the school sector there is no funding imperative to provide accredited Key Skills programmes. For both sectors the final decisions on the UCAS tariff and the response of employers are awaited with interest. The BTEC Common Skills deviation from the pattern is acknowledged.

In one college the existing A Level programme uses General Studies at GCSE and A Level as a vehicle for Key Skills work, with A Level tutors teaching the programme. It is likely that this will change, as the preferred strategy of heads of department now is to have a college wide policy using other qualifications. QCA have indicated that few other qualifications will be approved for assessing Key Skills outside the new Key Skills qualification. There is a suggestion that Key Skills experts should be named for each column in the timetable grid and that these individuals should run Key Skills workshops and coordinate the tracking of Key Skills. Tutors would supervise the building of portfolios.

Most colleges believe that the signposting of Key Skills in the new AS and A Level syllabuses will prove helpful, as will the more coherent FEFC funding of Key Skills. In some cases they intend to include Key Skills in a teaching grid where it will be timetabled with tutorial, enrichment activities and possible free-standing AS levels such as Citizenship, Critical Thinking or General Studies. A Key Skills Manager will coordinate portfolios and tests, with the active collaboration of personal tutors. There will be a workshop basis for some activities.

Example: a College Sixth Form Centre (Worcester College of Technology)

In this Sixth Form Centre all A Level students currently take an enhancement programme based upon the Cambridge Diploma of Achievement in which students study: Communication, IT, Numeracy, managing their own learning and working with others. 75% of all students have gained the Diploma.

All of the Centre staff have received training in the delivery of Key Skills and are qualified to assess the Key Skills components of the Diploma course. The course is organised through the tutorial system and additional hours have been allocated for it. Bolt-on courses are provided to students needing to develop their numeracy and IT skills. Introducing this qualification aim has significantly improved attendance at tutorial sessions and provided a focus for them.

The introduction of a national imperative is seen as a means of improving student motivation, and the allocation of UCAS points will aid this process. The College is in contact with OCR about whether the Diploma courses can be modified to fulfil national requirements and if they are, intends to continue to offer Key Skills and enhancement through this programme. The Centre has appointed a Key Skills coordinator to manage this programme. External testing will provide added motivation to students and staff and the centre anticipates that in some areas students will achieve at Level 4. The College vocational areas use BTEC Key Skills programmes and it will be important through the overall College Key Skills policy to ensure a good fit for all students.

Example: a rural tertiary college (Yale College, Wrexham)

At this College it is compulsory now for all full time A Level students to take an accredited Key Skills programme. Teaching time for each A Level subject has been extended by 30 minutes to five and three-quarter hours to allow for Key Skills development. Each subject team has mapped their schemes of work against the Key Skill standards in order to identify development and assessment opportunities. This information has been fed into a database so that gaps for each subject are clearly identified and suitable opportunities to fill them can be offered in the learning resource centre. A common system for tracking and recording achievement has been developed and communicated to staff. Teachers have received training as assessors.

Example: a sixth form college (King George V Sixth Form College, Southport)

This college is undertaking a pilot for Key Skills in 1999-2000. The pilot involves 46 first year. A Level students working with their tutors on the three core Key Skills plus managing their own learning. Whilst the approach to provision in 2000 will depend in part on the outcome of this pilot, an approach which offers support classes in each of the three main areas i.e. Communication, Application of Number and IT, is intended, with the student's personal tutor being allocated additional time for monitoring and managing profile evidence. Much is subject to funding arrangements.

Role of the personal tutor

The introduction of Curriculum 2000 enhances the importance of tutorial and counselling support and brings specific additional responsibilities for tutors in relation to guidance, monitoring, and Key Skills. Students, particularly those on mixed programmes, will need to be regularly monitored to ensure that they are making progress to achieving their objectives. Tutors will play a key role in ensuring that information about changes to a student's programme is recorded accurately. The arrangements for tracking students on modular and combined programmes need to be reviewed.

Example: a sixth form college (Newham Sixth form College, London)

This college has expanded the role of the tutor in a way that will be helpful under the new system. Three hour Supported Studies sessions embrace the delivery of IT Key Skills, Communication and Improving Own Learning and Performance. This experience provides the College with a model for the delivery and accreditation of the three prescribed Key Skills within the new Key Skills award.

Although some staff have tutored two groups the College is reluctant to move towards a system of specialist tutors. The College has always seen the role of the teacher and tutor as intertwined and has ensured that nearly all full time staff have a tutorial role.

Teaching and Learning

In a number of colleges the move towards more resource-based learning is seen as inevitable. The use of Key Skills workshops and further supported self-study can add flexibility to programmes. At one tertiary college in the project, A Level teaching last year was cut to four hours with the students spending one hour a week in the Learning Centre. This was part of a change in delivery whereby all courses included 20% of guided learning time delivered through flexible learning. The change was not seen as a success and this year the fifth hour has been reinstated. The subject teacher now works with the group in the Learning Centre.

There is a financial imperative to look for 'efficiency' in delivering programmes but colleges are wary of introducing changes that might threaten their students' chances of success. In a situation of fierce competition with other local providers, perhaps including grammar and independent schools, colleges cannot be seen to offer less 'teaching' than their neighbours. Parental concern that traditional teaching methods are employed is often very evident at information and consultation events. The possibility of collaboration between institutions could also be affected if colleges were to change their delivery methods.

Student Guidance

Colleges and the School Consortium all recognise that there are particular implications for student guidance arising from the Curriculum 2000 changes. Students will be expected to do more study and they have a wider range of options from which to choose their programme. Some students will need considerable encouragement to take on a larger and broader programme. Previous experience of optional programmes and of potential for an academic/vocational mix suggests that very committed and enthusiastic interviewer/tutor involvement will be necessary if in some cases students are not to follow the bare minimum programmes of their own inclination.

There are serious considerations for institutions in areas of social and economic deprivation where many students come from low income families, including those reliant on benefit. Students who want and need to spend significant time during the week in employment may be discouraged from staying in education or may find it difficult to keep up once enrolled. Many students do not come to college with disciplined study habits, such as a readiness to do a lot of homework. They may also be from the first generation to contemplate higher education. These factors present a particular challenge. In general an increase in time spent in the classroom will benefit the students but it is important that staff appreciate the difficulties many students may face.

Colleges and the school consortium will aim to guide students towards a coherent programme that takes full advantage of the choice and breadth available. There is a strong argument for encouraging students to map out their whole two year programme at initial enrolment even though some flexibility will have to be built in for year two. The most common pattern for a student's programme at this stage of the planning process would appear to be four first year AS courses, or the equivalent, plus Key Skills, tutorial and enrichment activities; some students will take more than this, others less.

A key time for student guidance in the future will be at the end of the first year, a time when staff are already heavily committed to advising both new entrants and A Level completers. Public exam results will come out too late for choices to be made firmly at the end of the academic year as they are now. Initial advice will be given in the summer term based on the students' performance during the year. The hope is that in most cases the exam result is merely a confirmation of the proposed course of action.

Colleges that currently organise guidance and enrolment on a departmental basis are planning to introduce whole college systems and procedures to reflect the overall curriculum offer available. One college has identified a need to train a team of 'individual programme designers' to interview potential students and visit schools.

Example: a tertiary college (Teeside Tertiary College, Middlesbrough)

This college is developing a centralised guidance and admissions system for next September. This will involve the development of a more consistent cross college initial interview and guidance procedure. All full time students applying for courses at the College will be given guidance about their complete programme of study and agreement reached before enrolment to any specific courses or schools is completed. Course entry requirements will conform to a revised cross-college specification and will be consistently applied as part of the student guidance process before and during enrolment. Additional support needs will be identified during the enrolment and screening processes. A training programme for cross college admissions tutors is being developed.

Example: a sixth form college (King George V Sixth Form College, Southport)

At this College course literature given out from November 1999 will concentrate on both AS and A2 as well as GNVQ combinations. Students will be encouraged to look at their full two year programme and will be asked to indicate on their initial application form up to 6 choices of AS courses. Discussion with each student in January-April 2000 will review the suitability of combinations being considered, bearing in mind any further guidance from DfEE, employers and HE. The College will place no formal limits on student choice other than a few combinations that the blocking system might prevent, but all combinations will be considered both at initial discussion (January-March) and final admissions stages (August).

Students wishing to follow only four AS subjects (including General Studies) will be informed that the College is uncertain of the approach of HE to this option, but they will not be barred, given parents confirm the choice.

Advanced GNVQ students will be advised that an AS course in addition to General Studies is desirable, especially if the student wishes to progress to a degree course.

4 Managing the change

Organisational contexts

There are considerable differences in the organisational structures of the sample institutions. These differences reflect their different histories and curriculum offer. In the sixth form colleges and the School Consortium the main focus is on daytime provision for 16–19 full time students. Student guidance, admissions and progression, all aspects of learning support, monitoring and assessment, the enrichment programme and so on are all organised centrally across the whole organisation and the curriculum is delivered through departments which offer both academic and vocational courses at different levels. Teachers often work on both types of programme. On the other hand in large tertiary and general FE colleges the student body is more varied in age, programmes and modes of study and there is a more decentralised form of organisation with vocational departments often operating different systems of guidance, enrolment and monitoring and possibly different timetables, depending on the requirements of the students' programmes. In these colleges the A Level programme may be all, or almost all, in one department.

The purpose of the Curriculum 2000 reforms is to create for 16–19 students a programme of Advanced level study which is flexible and provides the opportunity to mix academic and vocational courses. To make this happen to the students' and the institutions' advantage a whole college approach is vital. In FE and tertiary colleges with departmental structures based on vocational areas and a separate A Level centre or faculty there are generally difficult boundary issues to be addressed. Several Colleges identified the development of a college timetable as the first and most obvious requirement.

General FE colleges with a broad vocational curriculum have been very critical of some aspects of Curriculum 2000 and of FEFC Circular 99/33. Many young people in these colleges take qualifications other than those in the new package (AS/A2 and GNVQ) but these are left outside the new structure. It causes particular concern that BTEC National Diploma programmes are not included. The new model is seen as illogical in that it equates the full Advanced GNVQ to two A Levels in curriculum terms but not in funding terms.

While the sample did not include college/school consortia, there are some lessons to be learned from the management of the School Consortium, which is understandably complex. La Swap Sixth Form Consortium has four separate Governing Bodies and four Headteachers. The Governing Bodies each consider the La Swap Annual Report and regularly receive updates on post-16 initiatives. The four Chairs of Governors and the four Headteachers meet each term to coordinate their work. Much of the day-to-day management is conducted by the four Directors of Sixth who are all members of the Senior Management Teams of their own schools. They meet weekly with the La Swap Vocational Coordinator and Education Officer and carry overall responsibility for all post-16 pastoral and curriculum matters. They are supported by two Heads of Sixth in each school. These also meet on a regular basis and lead teams of tutors monitor and guide the work of students. An Education Officer (part-time) and an Administration Officer help communications between the different groups. In addition they produce the annual report, collate statistical information and deal with external marketing and recruitment.

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Each of the four La Swap Sixth Forms works within the context of an 11–18 institution. Although all the schools broadly welcome the philosophy behind the proposals for change, there are very real constraints on what it is possible to achieve. Any proposals concerning Curriculum 2000, for example on resourcing or timetabling, have an immediate impact on four separate schools and in particular the needs of the 11–16 pupils. For example changes to the number of courses taken and their teaching time could seriously disrupt the present timetable pattern and the amount of travelling any individual student may need to make. With more teaching in the Sixth Form and no additional resources the share of teaching must shift from pre to post-16. This has obvious consequences on set size and the quality of teaching and learning in the lower schools.

The planning process

Preparing for Curriculum 2000 is difficult because the timescale is short and there are so many unknowns (e.g. the response of HE providers, parents and the students themselves). There are fears about encouraging and resourcing a broader curriculum offer only to find that the customers, the students themselves, vote with their feet and follow a narrower subject base either from the start or partway through their programme. Generally there is a low level of awareness of the changes and an urgent need for some national promotion and publicity.

Guidance from the Government, and the awarding bodies, from the FEFC concerning funding and from the university sector has been both inadequate to inform local decisions and on a timescale which has been inappropriate. Local planning has been largely based on conjecture and it has been important to leave as much flexibility as possible. To a limited degree, colleges went through a similar situation in 1987 with the introduction of AS courses: in many cases they offered a range of AS courses with moderate success but lack of firm direction from the Government and a confused response from HE led to the failure of the initiative. It was felt that the inability of schools to offer a flexible curriculum caused Government to withhold from being directive and left HE unable to encourage the broader curriculum it claimed to favour. This experience has also contributed to the careful response to Curriculum 2000.

Some colleges have carried out extensive planning for implementation of the reforms. The planning issues for one sixth form college are set out in Appendix 4. An interesting example of the complexity of the planning process for a consortium is evident in the detailed planning programme for La Swap Sixth Form Consortium in Appendix 5.

Managing the transition

Some colleges are using existing management or curriculum task groups to work on the changes; others have recently set up new groups with the particular brief of preparing for Curriculum 2000. In one tertiary college the existing Curriculum Working Party, consisting of five heads of department and the directors of curriculum and resources - all members of the senior management team - were considered the obvious group to discuss the implications of Curriculum 2000 for the college. The director of marketing also joined the group. At meetings in August and September 1999 the group considered whole college issues and possible future strategies, deliberately taking a whole college view and not allowing individuals 'to fight their corner'. These included proposals for quite radical changes and the discussions were kept confidential for some time. The broad shape of the proposals went to the college principal in the early Autumn 1999. Decisions were made about the offer and a start made on implementing the policy with regard to school visits and admissions.

Another tertiary college set up two new working groups during the summer. One group prepared the college Curriculum 2000 portfolio, making recommendations on the courses to be offered in the framework across the whole college, preferred student programme models, and projections on enrolment numbers. The second group considered the admissions and interview strategy and marketing, especially the Curriculum 2000 prospectus. Both these groups were due to report to the college academic board in October 1999. The implementation phase, which includes a revised timetable structure, was to follow later.

At one of the largest sample institutions a small group (vice principal, general education manager and quality curriculum development manager) was set up in July to consider Curriculum 2000 and implementation issues. This group was be widened to include the student services manager, GNVQ coordinator, staff development manager and examinations manager. It was then extended to bring in other key managers at an appropriate time (e.g. marketing and admissions managers). The project group prepared draft proposals for discussion at the college strategic planning group meeting scheduled for early December 1999.

The first meeting of the group at the above college was a brainstorming session (Appendix 6).

Another college sees the change process as gradual with two main stages for the timetable, the first for September 2000 and the second for September 2001. During the coming year there will be workshops in which A Level and GNVQ teams will work together and with each other to devise flexible and accessible pathways for the new specifications.

Staff development

It is recognised that a coherent college wide strategy is vital; this is a key aspect of the change management process. In most colleges a staff development and training programme is underway but in some cases it has been on rather an ad-hoc, piecemeal and relatively uneconomic basis so far. Information about Curriculum 2000 and its implications have been given to different groups of staff through INSET programmes and written briefings, for example staff newsletters. One college has decided to produce a simple booklet for the relevant curriculum leaders.

Curriculum deputies have attended regional events organised by QCA or professional associations on the philosophy and funding implications of the changes and have then written papers for discussion and feedback. Subject leaders have attended conferences organised by the awarding bodies prior to holding meetings with their staff on the new specifications.

Colleges have been able to spend the money allocated by the FEFC to support the Implementation of Curriculum 2000 to assist their staff development activities.

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5 Delivery

Timetabling

The practical implementation issues covered in this section of the report include resourcing and timetabling the new curriculum.

All the sample colleges have been reviewing their timetable structure. It is clear from the colleges that the changes necessitate a whole college approach to timetabling and a common timetable system. Without this it will be logistically impossible to offer the flexibility required by Government.

In order to maximise the efficient use of resources it is planned to continue and perhaps increase the practice of putting several AS sets of the same subject into the same timetable slot, reducing the number of sets at the end of the first year. This helps with the problem of class size in the A2 sets. A revised programme will be offered to second year students, including AS courses. It is usual in colleges now to offer some new courses to second year students. Providing a one year AS programme to second year students will not be a problem.

For FE colleges there is a particular concern about the administration, timetabling and delivery of intensive one year A Level courses in the future, particularly for adult returners, which the new proposals have all but ignored. As AS/A2 are of different standards it will be difficult to teach mixed year groups as has sometimes happened in the past.

Example: a sixth form college (King George V Sixth Form College, Southport)

At present the college operates a timetable of five blocks, with a selection of A Levels in each of four blocks. General Studies, plus other elective courses, is located in the fifth block. Each A Level has four and a half hours of classes per week. Advanced GNVQ occupies two of the four subject blocks, with Additional Studies laid against the other two subject blocks.

If funding permits, the time allocation to each AS/A2 per week will remain unaltered. In light of the restricted calendar before final A2 module assessments in the second year the College currently intends to make no decrease in class contact time. It debated whether to continue with the five option block system or add a sixth and has now decided to have six timetable blocks. This will involve an extension of the College day including use of lunch periods.

Example: an FE College (West Kent College, Tonbridge)

This College will continue to use the existing grid structure with some adaptations. The emphasis is on evolution and refinement of what already exists rather than sudden, dramatic changes to established practices. Timetable workshops are being arranged for course teams to work on flexible pathways for students taking mixed programmes.

There will be constraints on the opportunities for an academic/vocational mix and it is on the minimising of these that the most detailed timetable work has focused. The failure of the new proposals to include the BTEC National qualification in the unit framework of 3-6-12 creates particular problems. There are other practical issues, for example allowing for placement and other days free of lectures and timetabling staff who cross programmes.

If another institution were to be involved, the timetable would have to be sufficiently common to make integration possible.

Example: a tertiary college (Teeside Tertiary college, Middlesbrough)

This College is planning to design a cross-college timetable to allow flexibility of combinations of courses including GCE A and AS Level, GNVQ 6 and 12 units (decisions on 3 unit awards are delayed at present), Key Skills support and other NVQ and BTEC National courses. Adjustments to the structure of the College day and week may be necessary to achieve this objective. It will be necessary to identify courses and programmes that are to be excluded from the standard timetable (with reasons). The College is considering using a computerised timetabling system.

Questions currently under discussion include:

How many blocks does the timetable need to meet requirements?
Do the blocks need to be equal in length and structure?
Does the day need to be changed in length/structure?
How will the college flexible learning targets be provided for within the timetable rules and structure?
How will Key Skills taught support be built into the timetable?
Will it be accessible to all students?'

The year cycle

The institutions in the project are reviewing the pattern of the year to take account of the new assessment cycle. Enrolment for the new intake cannot start before GCSE results and this dictates the start of teaching in the first year. Some colleges have decided to begin the A2 curriculum immediately after the AS examination period in the summer term of the first year, even though AS results might alter choices in August. The month of July cannot be wasted pending AS result outcomes. This will obviously require students having a clear idea what A2 subjects they want to take. A college-wide policy needs to be adopted because of college staff development activities that often take place at these times.

For school sixth forms a decision to change the summer term programme has implications for lower school activities and the deployment of staff involved in both pre and post-16 work.

The assessment and examination cycle

For colleges at present coping with four module sittings a year plus internal mocks, GNVQ external tests, and other external exams, the simplification of AS and A Level syllabuses into January and June sittings only will make the administrative task easier. Some colleges have decided that all students aiming for a GCE A Level award over 2 years will take the AS examination at the end of the first year. No January entries for first year AS programmes will normally be allowed to avoid disruption in a crowded teaching period. In the second year January entries will be allowed for students needing to re-sit AS units. All A2 examinations will normally be taken at the end of the second year. However in other schools and colleges there is still discussion over whether AS students will be put in for the first January module sitting. Some subject teachers, with a good experience of modular assessment, argue strongly that this is in the students' best interests. Arrangements for mock exams will need to be changed. The timing of reviews, reports and consultations with parents will need to be considered.

Funding

The most difficult issue facing both the college and the school sector in implementing Curriculum 2000 is that of resourcing a larger amount of learning. This is presenting serious funding issues for the institutions.

At the time of publication, the FEFC had not yet published its tariff for 2000 and colleges did not know the extent of the increase in funding they may receive to deliver the larger programme. The FEFC Circular 99/33 proposed the allocation of funding units to Key Skills and enhancement. The colleges in the sample felt that the proposed increase in funding by approximately 9% for a 'typical' A Level student would fall short of the amount required to deliver Curriculum 2000.

All post-16 providers will have to find additional funding for books and other resources, particularly examination fees which will increase on modular programmes. The costs of setting up new classes are considerably higher than the costs of servicing existing ones. School sixth forms are having to plan for the changes within their existing budget. There is no funding steer to encourage the introduction of Key Skills. In the consortium taking part in this project few economies can be made in teaching set sizes (the average first year A Level set is 17.5). More students taking more courses inevitably means more teaching. If one adds Key Skills to this then without additional resources, the share of teaching must shift from pre 16 to post-16. This has obvious consequences on set size and the quality of teaching and learning in the lower schools.

There will be a significant increase in exam entry costs. This is a major concern and will be a particular issue in June 2001 when the old A Level examinations overlap with the first year of AS.

Increase in teaching time and teaching costs

Some colleges feel relatively well placed to achieve the new learning agreements. In one sample FE college students often start A Level programmes taking four subjects; Key Skills and enhancement activities are already provided and GNVQ students have extended learning agreements through additional studies. Therefore, the proposed strategy to offer four 'AS' in the first year will not have significant funding implications. The college has room for efficiency savings because A Level class size averages 13.8 so there is room for infill. However, to achieve the Government's objective of five AS leading to four A Level (or an equivalent programme) will cause serious problems. Another college will have to rationalise its general education programme to deliver the new offer efficiently. This may mean a reduction in the A Level offer to ensure that set numbers are large in the first year and options can be made available in the second year.

For both financial and educational reasons some college curriculum areas are considering moving back to the more specialist National Diplomas from GNVQs for those students who are certain of their vocational choice. All post-16 providers are considering whether to cut the hours per week allocated to AS courses, in some cases from five to four and a half, in others from four and a half to four.

Example: a sixth form college (King George V Sixth Form College, Southport)

> At this College a decision to allow A Level/Advanced GNVQ students to take one additional subject in the first year, with equal resourcing of those AS courses to current first year A Levels, implies a 15% increase in student class time before consideration of Key Skills resourcing. Initial estimates are that a minimum of 20–25% additional funding is needed to meet requirements over and above current teacher costs. Initial FEFC proposals for additional funding are therefore of major concern, and if carried through would force a reduction in class contact time for courses or remaining with fewer subjects on offer to students.

Staffing

The case studies in this section raise particular issues about the need for an increase in teaching and support staff, and concerns about staff contracts. More registry staff may be required to track the increased number of separate programmes for each student.

Example: a sixth form college (King George V sixth form College)

> If this College assumes that student subject choices make classes that average 18 students, the additional staffing needed for academic classes is equivalent to 9 or 10 teachers. Key Skills is expected to create a need for a further 3 teachers. These calculations are seen as modest and make no allowance for remission needed for additional responsibilities. The current teaching staff level is 57 full time equivalents. All these calculations are based on optimistic assumptions regarding student choices and efficiency of allocation to classes.

Additional staffing will also be needed in support areas, most notably in the student registry to cope with more courses per student, with each on a shorter basis, and with the need for more complex tracking systems. The college's current heavy reliance on full time and permanent staff will be reviewed despite FEFC Inspectorate indications of the link between this pattern and quality of provision.

Example: an FE college (Worcester College of Technology)

The requirement that main grade lecturing staff teach 828 hours per year has created problems because of a reduced teaching year of 31/32 weeks in the second year of the A Level programmes which means staff teaching for approximately 24 hours per week. The introduction of Curriculum 2000 would further exacerbate this problem since first year A Level students will be taking examinations at the end of this first year, reducing teaching weeks from 36 to 32. This would increase weekly taught hours from 24 to 26. It is therefore necessary to develop a strategy to increase teaching weeks in the first year of the course. There are three possibilities:

- begin teaching a year earlier
- begin A2 programmes at the end of the examination period
- re-consider existing half-terms.

It is difficult to see how the teaching programmes could begin any earlier than at present. The Department's two year A Level course already starts a week earlier than the rest of the College and staff are required to return from their summer leave at the end of August because induction programmes take place in the first week of September. At the present time it is our intention to begin A2 programmes after the AS examination period has been completed.

Accommodation

New courses will produce accommodation demands. For some colleges this is more of a problem than for others. In some institutions class sizes could be increased within current spaces, provided that extra space for support staff can be found. Apart from the need for additional staff room/work room space for new teaching staff, one sixth form college estimates it will need to find about 165 hours of lessons per week. While a proportion of this will be found through increased room occupancy rates, the college has had to plan construction of additional teaching space to be ready for September 2000.

The scope for another sixth form college to use existing accommodation more intensively is limited by the fact that many of the students cannot stay for twilight or evening sessions, because of the cultural traditions of their families. Economic circumstances are also relevant. Since many of the students contribute significantly (or solely) to family income, through employment, the option of extending the college week to include Saturday is problematic.

The FEFC is concerned that accommodation shortage will not prevent the implementation of the curriculum reforms and will discuss accommodation issues with colleges where there may be problems, provided they are already operating to full capacity.

In the School Consortium each of the schools is operating close to, or over, full capacity. Rooms, and particularly specialist laboratory or IT facilities are likely to prove a limiting factor in planning the new curriculum offer.

Conclusion

The survey of seven colleges and a school consortium has highlighted many issues that need to be taken into account when planning for the implementation of the Curriculum 2000 reforms.

It is quite clear from the research that each college operates in its own context and all are preparing in different ways but are confronting the issues facing them in a positive manner that is supportive of the new reforms. It is important for colleges to examine their own circumstances and develop relating strategies for implementation. The examples provided give post-16 providers an opportunity to see how some colleges are approaching the implementation of Curriculum 2000.

Since the work was carried out in July 1999 the colleges involved have moved forward in their implementation of the new reforms. This report centres on the work in progress at the time of the research.

Appendix 1

The participating Institutions

King George V Sixth Form College, Southport

King George V is a Sixth Form College established in 1979. Daytime provision concentrates predominantly on students aged 16–19, which account for over 90% of its activity. There are about 1,050 16–19 full time students of whom 900 are following A Level programmes and about 100 Advanced GNVQ programmes. A small group of students are on a one year GCSE programme. There are also a significant number of adult evening courses.

The large majority of A Level students follow a programme of three A Levels plus General Studies. About 10% follow four A Levels plus General Studies. No student starts on a two A Level programme. A small number drop their third A Level during their two year course. About a quarter of all A Level entries are modular.

Advanced GNVQ students are all able to take General Studies at A Level and several also opt to follow a further A Level instead of Additional Studies.

Over 90% of 16–19 students progress to HE.

The College draws students from Sefton and South West Lancashire. Its main competition for students is from 11–18 schools, including a substantial independent sector. The college has a good academic reputation and is usually over-subscribed each September. One result of this is that the college has been able to ensure an efficient level of class sizes - the average is 18 students in September of each year - and to achieve good retention and achievement. The potential for 'infill' is negligible and all additional provision at the College will require additional teachers and additional rooms.

Newham Sixth Form College, London

The College was established in 1992 to improve the staying-on rate and educational achievement in the London Borough of Newham. From the start the College has offered a broad and relatively flexible vocational and academic curriculum and staff have been recruited who are able to deliver both types of programmes. The staffing structure has not recognised a divide between academic and vocational learning and teachers are assigned to curriculum teams that are responsible for GNVQ/BTEC and A Level programmes. This has helped the college to develop cross-curricular links successfully and has been a factor in enabling students to access both GNVQ/BTEC qualifications and one or more A Levels.

In 1999 the offer at Advanced level included 27 A Level subjects and more than 20 vocational programmes. The college has already made progress in developing individualised learning programmes and in 1998 started a Diploma that gives recognition to a range of student achievements and enrichment activities.

The College's biggest challenge in the drive to raise standards over the past two or three years has been to improve the retention and achievement of students on GNVQ programmes.

The area has a number of 11–18 schools and there are sixth form and general further education colleges in the area.

North Devon College, Barnstable

North Devon College is a tertiary college situated in Barnstaple. It serves a large, isolated rural area and is for most of the local population the sole provider of post-16 education. This has directly influenced the College's Mission and curriculum offer. Courses have been kept open in Engineering and in Catering despite high costs and relatively low recruitment because the College is the only local provider. The nearest college is just over thirty miles away at Tiverton; Exeter College is some forty miles to the south-east. The College catchment area contains seven 11–16 feeder schools, two in Barnstaple and the other five in the small towns of the region. There are only two 11–18 schools in the area and the college is not exposed to much direct competition. In 1998/9 the College had 1,925 full time students and 8,576 part time. This September about 2,300 full time students have been enrolled.

The College has good relations with its feeder schools and spends time and effort on tasters and school visits.

The College is organised in five fairly autonomous departments. Currently the Arts and Sciences Department provides an A Level programme of 27 subjects, which recruits about 300 students annually, GNVQs in Science and Art and Design, National Diplomas in Performing Arts and Music Technology, a range of Access to Higher Education courses, stage one degree programmes in English, History and Fine Art and an HNC in Design. The Department provides Modern Language teaching across the college. The other departments at North Devon are Business and IT, Leisure Industries, Social and Community Studies and Technology.

Teeside Tertiary College, Middlesborough

Teeside Tertiary College has a total of 2,062 full-time students and 5,152 part-time students. It is situated in an area of high social deprivation and high unemployment. Middlesbrough is ranked 343 out of 366 on the department of environment's Index of local Conditions. Only 27.5% of pupils leaving Year 11 achieved 5 or more GCSE Grades A*-C against a national average of 46.3% and in 1998 only 48% of school leavers went on to further education. The College draws about 50% of students from outside Middlesbrough. The College is organised on two campuses and offers a wide range of provision from entry to level 4. At Advanced Level the offer includes 41 A Levels, 21 AS levels, 11 GNVQs, 15 BTEC National Diplomas and Certificates and a number of other vocational awards. In 1999 the A Level pass rate for students aged 16–18 was 84% and point score per student was 15.3.

There is competition locally for Advanced Level students with another FE college and a Catholic sixth form college less than a mile away.

West Kent College, Tonbridge

West Kent College is situated on one main site in Tonbridge, with some additional accommodation at other locations in the town. It is a general FE College with a significant amount of Higher Education work arising from its status as an Associate College of the University of Greenwich. Current enrolment is around 2,200 full time students and 3,000 part time. There is continuing outward collaborative provision, though this is in planned decline.

A wide variety of courses is offered in all of the 10 FEFC programme areas, at all levels and in all modes of provision; there are in excess of 400 qualification aims. 20-25% of 16–19 full time students are on A Level programmes in any one year. There is still significant BTEC National provision in Art and Design, Performing Arts and Engineering.

The Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells catchment area contains grammar schools, comprehensives and high schools, some of which have small, recently ratified sixth forms. The decline in West Kent's level three numbers can be directly correlated with the growth of sixth forms in the area. These schools are competitors rather than feeder schools. They have increasingly developed their GNVQ portfolio so that the competition has extended beyond A Level studies and into the vocational areas which six years ago were the sole province of the college. Giving information to year 11 students about the College's curriculum offer has always been difficult.

Worcester College of Technology

Worcester College of Technology is a medium sized general FE College situated in the centre of the city. The local city schools are 11–16 comprehensives and at the end of Year 11 students have a choice of moving on to Worcester College of Technology or Worcester Sixth Form College which is on the outskirts of the city. There is direct and intense competition between WCT, the Sixth Form College and 11–18 high schools in the county. In recent years both the sixth form college and the county schools have expanded their offer and many have improved their facilities to retain their own students and encourage new applicants. In many of the surrounding GFE colleges the provision of full-time Advanced Level GCE courses has declined dramatically.
To date the LEA has not sought - nor have individual county high schools or the Sixth Form College - to collaborate with Worcester College of Technology but this might change if the Lifelong Learning Partnerships pursue this aspect and if funding for school sixth forms is reduced.

The College has distinct marketing advantages, for example an attractive location and mature ambience, staff with good academic and industrial/commercial experience, consistently good A Level results and tutorial and counselling provision of a high quality.

In response to the intense competition locally for level three students it was decided three years ago to convert a significant part of the college's accommodation into a sixth form centre. The centre has developed procedures, practices and systems which relate specifically to the needs of its main student groups. The strategy has been successful. The sixth form centre is popular and sufficient students are recruited each year for the college to maintain an offer of 28 A Level subjects. The offer is continually under review, occasionally in collaboration with other institutions (e.g. A Level music with the Elgar School of Music) but more often in partnership with other departments within the college (for example A Level PE with Hospitality, A Level Electronics with Engineering or A Level Law with Management). The College intends to use the opportunity provided by Curriculum 2000 to provide a proper framework for these internal partnerships that have not always been effective in the past. Through its vocational departments the College offers a comprehensive range of the existing GNVQ Advanced, BTEC National Diploma and NVQ full time courses.

Yale College, Wrexham

Yale College is a large tertiary college in Wrexham with over 24,000 enrolments and total student numbers of 11,000 at the end of 1998/9. It has seen a growth of 43% in terms of FTEs and of 73% in terms of Welsh Funding Council targets between 1994/5 and 1998/9.

The College has two main campuses and more than 20 outreach centres based in local high schools, libraries and community centres. It became a full tertiary institution in 1994 when Yale Sixth Form College merged with the vocational FE curriculum remaining at North East Wales Institute after its incorporation as a higher education provider.

All Wrexham High Schools are 11–16 with the exception of one Welsh medium school, which has its own sixth forms. Students come to the College from the six partner schools and from a much wider area of rural Wales, Shropshire and Cheshire. 75% of the full time students are 16–19.

The College has provision at all levels and in all the FEFCW Programme Areas with a total of 42 A Levels, 23 AS levels, 22 GCSEs and 11 GNVQs. It also offers a full range of vocational programmes including NVQs, National Diplomas and Certificates and other professional qualifications. The College operates a matrix organisational structure with curriculum delivery organised through nine schools. A General Education Manager coordinates the extensive A Level provision which is spread over seven schools.

General Education programmes (A Levels etc) and GNVQs are delivered across a five-block matrix timetable; this gives students the flexibility to study GNVQs with A/AS levels or with GCSEs. Students are also able to access an enrichment programme that includes a range of activities such as sports, Radio Yale, Duke of Edinburgh Awards and a range of community options. 70.2% of the 16–18 year olds progress to Higher Education.

The staying on rate at 16+ in Wrexham is low (60%) compared with regional figures and the College is working on a number of strategies to address this including school link courses and providing support for GNVQ Part One programmes in schools.

La Swap Sixth Form Consortium, Camden

La Swap is the name given to the Sixth Form Consortium arrangement linking the post-16 provision of four separate schools, la Sainte Union, William Ellis, Acland Burghley and Parliament Hill. The Consortium is based in the London Borough of Camden on the fringes of the inner city serving a diverse ethnic and socio-economic population. The Consortium operates in a very competitive environment. Within the catchment area there are successful post-16 providers within the school, Sixth Form College, FE and independent school sectors.

The sixth form roll of La Swap fluctuates around 1,050. Staying on rates from the 11–16 component schools average 62% and a further 200 or so students join the consortium from neighbouring schools. There are generally more girls (58%) than boys.

The consortium offers some 25 A and AS level subjects, 10 GNVQ courses covering Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced levels, a GCSE retake package and 2 NVQ level 2 courses. 76% of the provision is at A Level and 7% Advanced GNVQ. Results are consistently above national averages (A Level 1999 92% A-E pass rate with 62% at grades A-C). Approximately 75% of students completing a two year Advanced level programme progress to Higher Education.

KING GEORGE V SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

ENTITLEMENT/ENRICHMENT/QUALITY EDUCATION

Tutorial and Pastoral Support

Target Setting and Recording Achievement

Personal and Social Education

Competence in IT and the use of the College network and

Learning Resource Centre

Careers

Sporting Activities — **Recreational**, **Fun**, **Team and Competitive**

Music — **Orchestra**, **Choir**, **Band**, **Recording Studio**, **Concerts/Musicals/Public Performances**

Art

Drama

Young Enterprise

Duke of Edinburgh

Foreign Exchanges France, Germany, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Siberia, European Conferences

Transnational Projects – Curriculum and Environmental

Clubs and Societies

TEESSIDE TERTIARY COLLEGE

CURRICULUM 2000

ACADEMIC & VOCATIONAL COMBINATIONS:

CURRENT GNVQ Advanced (12 Unit Award)	PROPOSED GNVQ Advanced (6 Unit Award) (Vocational A Level)	POSSIBLE 'A' Level Combinations	
Leisure and Tourism	YES	BUSINESS LANGUAGES	COMPUTING
Health and Social Care	YES	BIOLOGY SOCIOLOGY	PSYCHOLOGY
Art & Design	YES	ENGLISH HUMANITIES FILM STUDIES	MEDIA PHOTOGRAPHY
Business	NO Content very Similar to Business 'A' level	ECONOMICS LAW	LANGUAGES INFORMATION TECH.
IT	YES	ANY 'A' LEVEL	
Engineering Currently delivered through Nat. Dipl.	YES	MATHS PHYSICS LANGUAGES	SCIENCE BUSINESS
Media	YES	ENGLISH PHOTOGRAPHY ART COMPUTING	PSYCHOLOGY FILM STUDIES BUSINESS STUDIES
Performing Arts	YES	THEATRE STUDIES HUMANITIES ART	ENGLISH MEDIA DANCE
Science	YES	INFORMATION TECH.	LANGUAGES

Issues

- A limited number of three unit awards is currently being developed for introduction in 2000
- Parity of time allocation for GNVQ and 'A' level
- Timetabling – block system to identify GNVQ blocks
- Key Skills

Other New Courses Proposed

- GNVQ Leisure and Tourism Foundation (possible start date September 1999)
- NCFE Certificate for Tour Managers
- NCFE Certificate for Resort Representatives

KING GEORGE V SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

PLANNING ISSUES

PLANNING FOR 2000

- AS/A2 Developments
- Key Skills

CONSTRAINTS ON THE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- time
- staffing
- space
- funding

TIME

- number of hours per course
  - per week
  - per year
- number of 'blocks'
- the effects on the College day
- the effects on the College year
- *what if no additional funding or the funding is limited ?*

STAFFING

- increase
  - the overall percentage increase
  - what areas are likely to require additional funding?
  - group sizes
- *what if no additional funding or limited funding?*

SPACE

- number of rooms
- size of rooms/size of classes
- number of lessons per week
- *what if no additional funding or the funding is limited ?*

FUNDING

- how much extra ?
- what if no additional funding ?
- what if funding is limited ?

PLANNING FOR 2000

- AS /A2
- KEY SKILLS

IMPACT ON TEACHING TIME

Assumptions

- 4 + 3 or 5 + 3 model (plus current Gen St provision)
- time unchanged per course
- AS and A2 take same time
- ignoring Key Skills (initially)

Current Provision at KGV

CLASSES AT KGV

	Per Week:	% of Total
A Level	925	69.60%
Conv	21	1.58%
GNVQ	129	9.71%
GCSE	79	5.94%
Gen St	45	3.39%
Tutorial	105	7.90%
Other Enrichmnt	25	1.88%
Total	1329	

IMPACT OF 4 + 3

(6 units to 7 units)

- A Level provision up by 16.7%
- A levels constitute 80% of total
- Therefore increased teaching time = 13.4%

IMPACT OF 5 + 3

(6 units to 8 units)

- A Level provision up by 33.3%
- A levels constitute 80% of total
- Therefore increased teaching time = 26.8%

IMPACT OF 4 + 3

(6 units to 7 units)

To maintain same teaching time:

- Reduce AS by 25%
- From 4.5 h to 3.4 h per course

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IMPACT OF 5 + 3
(6 units to 3 units)

To maintain same teaching time:
- Reduce AS by 40%
- From 4.5 h to 2.7 h per course

KEY SKILLS
(assumed Yr 12 only)

- Information Technology
  - Currently c 50% (250) CLAIT 1at 1.6 h / wk
  - Funded at 13 units = 3250 units
    - What if funding for Key Skills is withdrawn?
  - Need to half provision and double students
  - Funded at 5 units = 2500 units
  - Can a qualification be achieved?

KEY SKILLS

- APPLICATION OF NUMBER
- COMMUNICATION
  - Drop in basis?
  - Monitored by Tutor?
    - What if Super Tutor system?
- Resource implication?
  - KGV c 60 h per week of staff time

TOTAL COSTS?

AS teaching (5+3)	£300,000
Key Skills (I.T.)	£ 20,000
Key Skills (Drop In)	£ 8,000
Key Skills (Tutor Support)	£ 60,000
Exams: incl. doubling modular	£ 35,000
Total	£423,000

Plus Rooms, Admin
About 15% of budget

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PLANNING FOR CURRICULUM 2000

LA SWAP SIXTH FORM CONSORTIUM

CURRICULUM 2000

POSSIBLE TIMELINE — THIRD DRAFT

June 99

- Circulate HODs with SHA summary document *(DSFS)*
- Organise Curriculum 2000 Planning Day for Directors of Sixth with input from external consultant *(MR)*
- Schedule discussion following introductory plenary at La Swap HODs to consider mechanisms for achieving a co-ordinated departmental response to changes *(DSFS)*
- HODs to read draft specifications from Boards and/or attend relevant Inset *(HODs)*

July 99

- Attend SHA and QCA implementation conferences *(DSFS)*
- Presentation to Heads and Chairs on key issues *(MR)*
- Read QCA documentation on possible models of delivery *(DSFS)*
- Obtain FAS document on 'Costing Sixth Forms' *(MM)*
- Agree to participate in FEDA project on implementation processes *(MR)*

September/October 99

- Timetablers meet with DSFS to consider implications of Curriculum 2000
- Cost more likely options from QCA range of models in the La Swap context *(DSFS)*
- Estimate sixth form budget 'share' for 2000/2001 based on October 99 post 16 numbers *(MM)*
- Involve CLEA in calculations to date particularly with regard to 'Fair Funding' *(Heads/Chairs)*
- Meeting with Heads and Chairs to look at possible models and costings *(Heads/Chairs/DSFS)*
- Respond to consultation on White Paper – 'Learning to Succeed' *(Heads/Chairs)*
- Identify recommended subject specifications pending final approval *(HODs)*
- Write summary page(s) for insert to La Swap prospectus *(DSFS)*
- La Swap Senior Staff meet to discuss impacts of different models on whole school provision *(La Swap SMT)*

November 99

- Consult with HODs during La Swap Meeting on course structure and patterns of study *(DSFS)*
- Agree pattern of study and timetable structure *(Heads)*
- Consider contribution of PHS as Technology College to the consortium as a whole- particularly in the area of IT Key Skills *(PHS SMT/DSFS)*
- Draw up Draft Course Offer for 'transition' year and cost teaching time *(DSFS)*
- Consider rooming implications *(Timetablers)*
- Estimate examination costs *(Examination Officers)*
- Repeat process for second (A2) year *(As above)*
- Explain changes to Year 10/11 during a KS5 Curriculum Focus Week *(DSFS + HODs)*
- Prepare evening presentations to parents of home based Year 10/11 *(DSFS)*
- Invite Governors to the above *(Heads)*
- Consider marketing in the local press *(MM)*

- Plan La Swap Inset Day on Curriculum 2000 and invite guest speaker *(DSFS)*

December 99

- Short subject summaries produced for Course Booklet *(HODs)*
- Decide on format and additional content of Course Booklet *(Steering)*
- Write additional content *(DSFS)*
- Arrange printing for January distribution *(MM)*

January 2000

- Issue Course Booklet *(HOY 11)*
- Progression interview with each Year 11 student – provisional choices recorded (DSFS/HO6)
- Prepare evening presentations to parents of new entrants *(DSFS)*
- La Swap HODs meeting used to prepare subject material for Open Day in February *(HODs)*
- Budget figures reworked using 2000 Form 7 figures *(MM)*

February/March 2000

- Progression interview with each new entrant – provisional choices recorded *(DSFS/HO6)*
- La Swap Inset Day arrangements finalised *(DSFS)*

April 2000

- Amend Draft Course Offer in the light of provisional student choices *(DSFS)*
- Use results to inform staff recruitment process *(Heads)*

May/June 2000

- Consider pattern of assessment and review for new Year 12 *(Value Added Group)*
- Consider role of the tutor in supporting students monitoring their own learning *(HO6)*
- La Swap HODs meeting used to prepare subject material for Induction Day in July *(HODs)*

July 2000

- Timetables produced and checked *(Timetablers)*

August/September 2000

- All new Year 12 students interviewed post GCSE results and guided towards suitable courses *(DSFS/HO6)*
- New courses start *(All)*

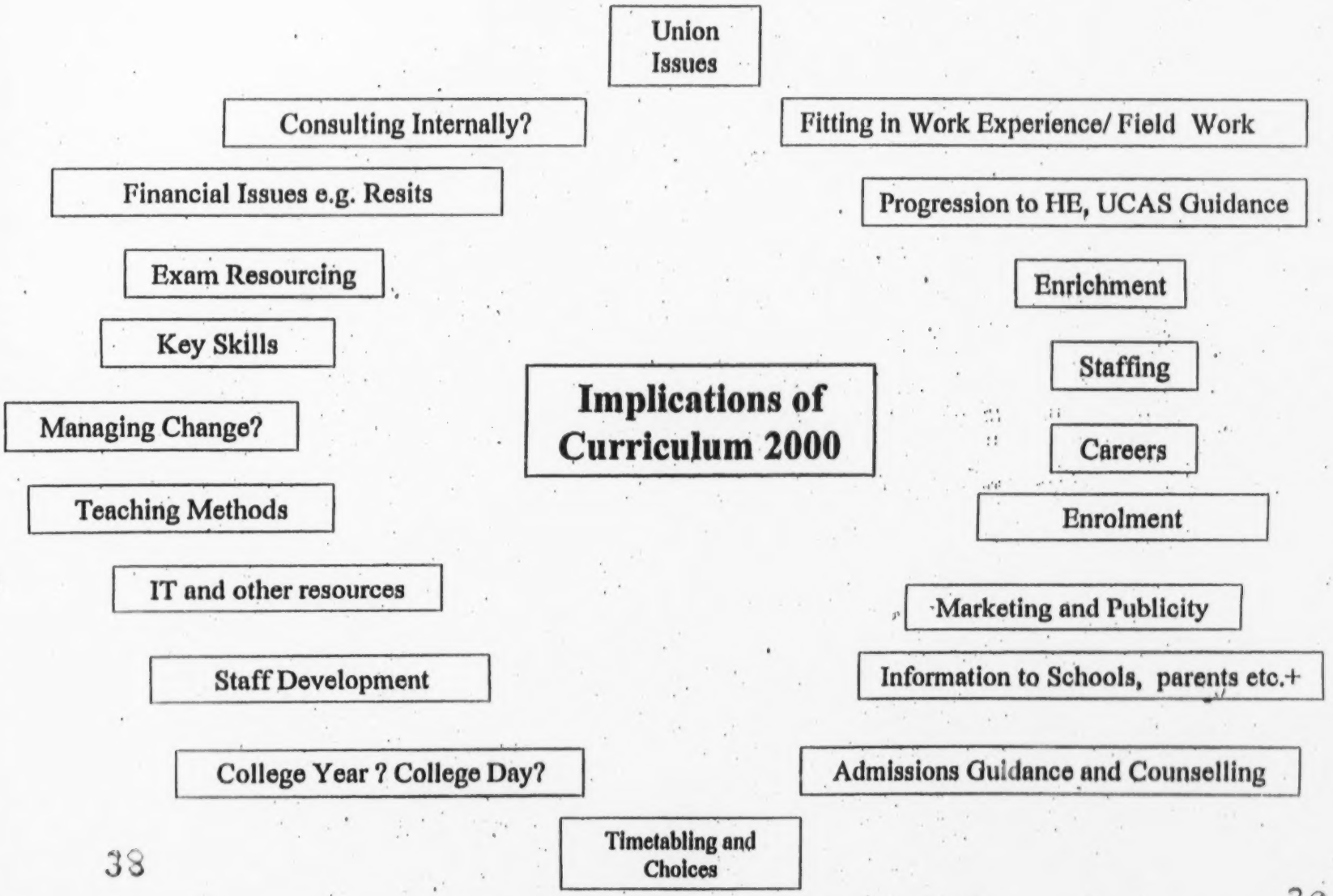
October 2000

- Review of match between course offer and student demand *(DSFS)*
- Begin to plan for the A2 year *(DSFS)*

Malcolm Rose
7/7/99
mr/curr2000/timeline

BRAINSTORMING SESSION

YALE COLLEGE, WREXHAM



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